



News Release

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West Nile Virus Detected in Kane County

Public urged to take precautions against spread of the virus

(Kane County, UT) – The Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD) and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) are reporting the first identification of West Nile virus (WNV) in Utah for 2008. A crow in Kane County tested positive at a private veterinary lab.

“Now that we have our first detection, it is important for the public to remember that West Nile virus season has arrived and that it’s time to start taking the usual precautions to prevent its spread,” said SWUPHD director and health officer Dr. David Blodgett.

West Nile virus is carried by mosquitoes which in turn can infect other animals and humans by biting them. Utahns can “Fight the Bite!” and protect themselves from West Nile virus by:

- Using mosquito repellents containing DEET or picaridin when outdoors from dusk to dawn.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants while outdoors.
- Getting rid of standing water on your property to reduce mosquito populations (old tires, buckets, wading pools, etc.).

While most people who become infected with the virus will not experience any symptoms, about 20 percent of those infected will develop moderate to severe flu-like

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symptoms. Less than 1 percent of infected people will experience the most severe form of West Nile virus infection, which can include headache, paralysis, and other illness of the brain and spinal cord and can cause prolonged or permanent disability. There is no age at which there is no risk, but the risk of severe complications increases with age. In addition, there is increased risk for people of any age who have diabetes. In 2007, 70 human West Nile virus cases and two deaths were reported in Utah.

For more information visit the UDOH website at www.health.utah.gov or SWUPHD's website at www.swuhealth.org.

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